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UNCLAS HARARE 001378

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PD, AF/S, AF/RA

NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER

LONDON FOR GURNEY

PARIS FOR NEARY

NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: LAW SOCIETY LEADERS FREED AFTER 48 HOURS IN JAIL

1. Law Society of Zimbabwe (LSZ) President Sternford Moyo and LSZ Executive Secretary Wilbert Mapombere were released from police custody on June 5 after spending 48 hours in custody on charges of plotting to overthrow the government of Robert Mugabe. The two have been ordered to appear at the Harare Magistrates' Court on June 6 to be formally charged for contravening a section of the newly enacted Public Order and Security Act (POSA).
2. Moyo and Mapombere are alleged to have written letters to the British High Commission in Harare and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), calling for the suspension of crisis talks between the opposition MDC and Mugabe's ruling ZANU PF party. The government also accused Moyo and Mapombere of writing letters in support of mass action. The two men have denied the charges as "fabricated and without any legal foundation."
2. Meanwhile, the High Court of Zimbabwe ruled that Moyo and Mapombere's arrest was lawful. The ruling by Judge President Justice Garwe in Harare yesterday dismissed an application by the two lawyers that sought to have the arrest and detention declared unlawful.

SULLIVAN